

CONGRESSMAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEFLEY REACTS TO THE CLINTON DEFENSE BUDGET

Military Construction Funding is Far Short of the Need

(Washington, D.C. – February 6, 1997) U.S. Representative Joel Hefley (R-Colorado), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities, reacted today to the President's budget request for military construction and military family housing programs of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 1998.

"I am deeply concerned about the President's budget request for FY1998 which includes a \$1.6 billion cut in military construction and military family housing. The budget request represents a 16 percent reduction in current spending levels. There is no question that a very serious military housing crisis is upon us. We know that serious deficiencies in the quality of defense facilities and infrastructure are an impediment to training and readiness. And, it should be obvious to anyone that facilities built in the 1940s and 1950s are simply unequipped to handle the weapons systems and equipment of the 1990s and beyond. The \$8.4 billion requested by the Administration seems to most folks like a lot of money, but it continues a pattern of underinvestment by this Administration that will not halt the general decline of the Nation's military infrastructure.

"The serious facilities shortfalls confronting the military services are well documented. To address them, the President's request contains scattered bright spots, particularly the sizable request for new barracks construction for the Army at home and abroad. However, the lonesome few are overwhelmed by broader budget decisions that are troubling and very serious. For example, the Air Force military construction account would be cut by the President by roughly one-third and family housing construction for the Navy would be cut by 44 percent.

"The long-term health of the Nation's military infrastructure is clearly at risk. The budget is simply not adequate to address the immediate requirements of the military services. Just two nights ago, the President pledged his support, as he has done on many occasions, for the men and women who serve this country. This budget request falls far short of the support they need — and that they deserve."

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